

THE COURIER

Quarterly Publication of the Bethel Historical Society's Regional History Center
Volume 26, Number 1 (2002)



Proposed Robinson House renovations (south side)

SOCIETY TRUSTEES ADOPT BUILDING CONCEPT AND CONSTRUCTION TIMETABLE

Earlier this year, the Bethel Historical Society Board of Trustees accepted the concept and proposed construction timetable (subject to funding) of the O'Neil Robinson House addition, which will add over 10,000 square feet of new construction to the House within a connected farm building concept similar in form to the adjoining Dr. Moses Mason House and the other "sister" house, the John Hastings Homestead across Mason Street from the Dr. Mason House. All three of these residences were once owned by sisters (Agnes, Abigail, and Betsey Straw) who married Bethel men, Dr. Moses Mason, John Hastings, and O'Neil Robinson, respectively.

In May 1998, the Society began a new era for its 1150+ members, and 4000+ annual visitors with the purchase of the Robinson House. Since that time over \$600,000 from over 400 individuals, corporations and foundations has been raised by the Capital Campaign Committee to fund the acquisition of the Robinson House, replace the roofing, repoint the chimneys, install a new electrical system, repair and winterize the windows, and add more insulation. We also managed to increase the endowment with funds which were made possible through a matching challenge grant.

For nearly thirty years, the Society's first building, the Dr. Moses Mason House, has provided storage for the collection, but that space has become increasingly inadequate. Within the proposed new building there will be several thousand square feet of state-of-the-art storage along with a research library, historical classroom,

traditional craft room, and collection care facilities. When this building is completed, the Society's extensive collection of documents, books, photographs, and artifacts will have a proper home. The rich history of the Bethel area and northern New England will come alive for scholars, students, and visitors drawn to what area promoters have proclaimed "Maine's most beautiful mountain village."

The Society prepared a business plan prior to launching the second phase of the capital campaign. After much study by the Building Committee working with the architect and others, it was finally determined that approximately \$1.1 million would be necessary to complete the addition to the Robinson House. To accomplish this major Society undertaking, it was decided to break the project into several stages. Efforts are being undertaken now to raise enough funds to build the exterior of the building in 2003, possibly complete the interior first floor in 2004, and finish the second floor and dedicate the building in 2005, bearing in mind that completion of all of these goals will depend upon the receipt of adequate financial support from individuals, corporations, and foundations.

To accomplish this project, support from everyone who can help is being sought. There are several naming opportunities remaining as well as the chance to provide needed furniture and equipment. Gifts can also be spread over several years and be in the form of cash, securities, real estate, personal property, or other financial instruments. For further information, please call (207) 824-2908 or (800) 824-2910 or e-mail us at info@bethelhistorical.org

(Floor plans on page 4)



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As of 20 June 2002, over \$600,000 had been raised from cash, stock, gifts, pledges, grants, and challenges from over 400 donors.

Corporate Gifts

Exxon \$1000
 Grantham, Mayo, Van Otterloo & Co. LLC \$5000
 Mead Publishing Paper Division \$4000
 Northeast Bank \$25,000

In-Kind Services

Lee F. Carroll, Electrical Engineer, Gorham, NH, Design \$1904
 Points North Surveying, Bethel, Property Survey \$392.50
 James and Anne Mann, West Paris, Maine Gem Necklace \$5,000

Foundation Grants

Betterment Fund \$75,000
 Bingham Trust \$10,000
 Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust \$2,500
 Davis Family Foundation \$40,000
 Dean Fisher Charitable Foundation \$15,000
 Libra Foundation \$10,000
 Simmons Foundation \$7,500

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(\$25,000 or more)

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The quick success of Phase I of the Society's Capital Campaign, capped by the burning of the Robinson House mortgage, surprised and pleased us all. Again my thanks go to all who made this possible.

Now we begin Phase II of the Capital Campaign, the construction of the new ell and barn designed to continue the connected farm building concept present in the adjoining Dr. Mason House property. I believe many members and the general public have already seen these designs (see pages 1 & 4) and scale model of this proposed new construction.

At this point, we begin the final push to realize our dream and attain the expanded research library, display space, traditional craft room, conservation facilities, collection storage, and historical classroom that we have needed for some time. Completion of the Robinson House project will enable the Society to more completely fulfill its mission as the Regional History Center for Northern New England.

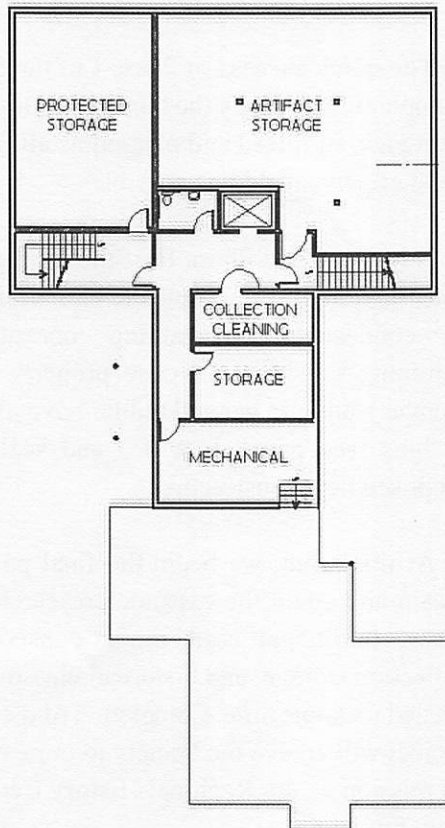
My sincere thanks to the Capital Campaign Committee for their willingness to take on this challenge for the Phase II: William Andrews, Chair, Robert P. Chadbourne, Walter Hatch, John B. Head, Susan Herlihy, Rebecca P. Kendall, Lois Kilroy, Thomas H. Mitchell, Lucy Nordahl, Ted Orino, Henry Stewart, Michael S. Stowell, Jaquelyn VanLeuven, and Margaret Wight. I hope everyone will join them in supporting their Society in this most important effort. Thanks so much.

Alvin Barth

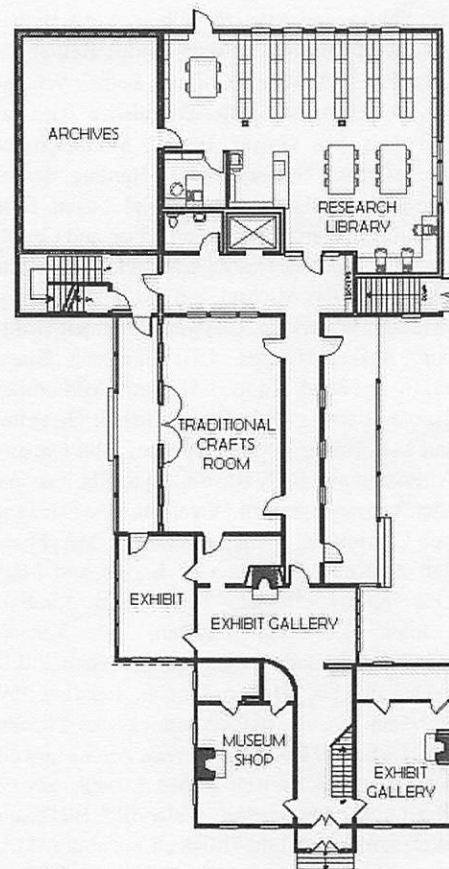
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Help keep the Society strong by making a gift to its Annual Fund Campaign. Tax deductible contributions help support its exhibits, special events, publications, and other programming. Gifts in any amount may be made throughout the year to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012.

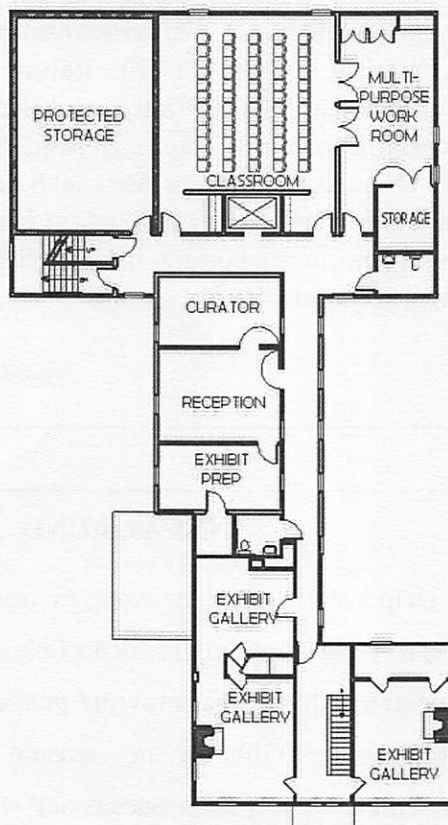
Conceptual Robinson House Expansion Floor Plans



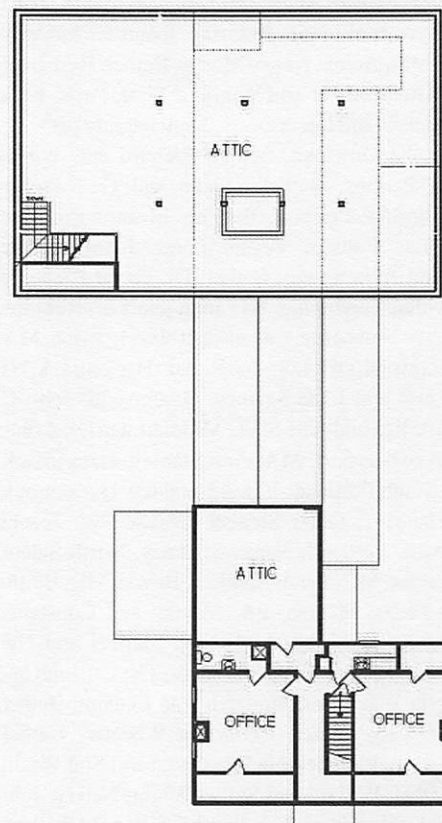
BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



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Notes Regarding Bethel, Maine

by

William A. Valentine

(continued from the last issue)

The Old Mill on Chapman Brook

The Rev. Eliphaz Chapman, the first settler on the Chapman farm, had three sons. Timothy, who succeeded him on the home farm, George Whitefield, who I think built his first cabin near the bank of the Androscoggin just below where Chapman Brook enters the river, and Edmund Chapman who had a saw mill and grist mill on Chapman Brook about a mile from the river.

I think both mills were out of use before 1870 but Grandfather Goddard married the widow of a son of Deacon Edmund and he was an expert millwright and repaired the saw mill and put it in working order, but he died in 1872 and nothing was done after that to keep things up and the mill gradually went to ruin.

In 1882, one day when some of our boarders were having a picnic at the falls up the stream I spent some time looking over the old abandoned mill.

The grist mill was driven by an overshot water wheel probably eighteen feet or more in diameter. The saw mill had a long blade fastened securely in a wooden frame sliding up and down in wooden guides.

It was driven from below the floor of the mill by a flutter wheel which was made as follows: The shaft was of wood about eighteen inches in diameter. Wooden arms were morticed into it and each pair of arms carried a paddle or float about a foot wide and perhaps six feet long. The water was guided to strike the floats and pass underneath the wheel. A heavy iron crank was driven into the end of the saw frame. As I remember it, the stroke of the saw would be somewhere about thirty inches.

The saw log carriage was driven by a vertical wooden shaft wide wooden paddles on the lower end and wooden teeth engaging with wooden teeth on the log carriage on the upper end.

The outfit was very wasteful of water and would nearly empty the mill pond in making one cut but they would close the gates when one board was sawed, push back the log carriage by hand and set the log over by measurement to the right position for the next board and by that time the pond was full and ready to saw another board.

When my father first came to Bethel, the first mill was in operation and the miller could catch a mess of trout from the mill pond any time he wanted to in the time it took to grind a grist of grain.

In 1875 for a short time, a Mr. Law brought steam power there and had a clothespin factory there for a short time.

About 1878 to 1881, there was a steam operated spool strip saw mill a little farther down on the stream.

Finally in 1883 & 1884, the grandson of Deacon Edmund installed a modern turbine wheel and spool strip saw mill and operated it for about four years.

Some of the time they also had a shingle machine there and also sawed shingles.

In 1888, they went broke and the mill stood idle for several years.

When the mill and farm were sold at auction, James



MEMBER PROFILE

Lee Barth

Lee Barth was born in Newton, MA and grew up in Marblehead, where she spent a good deal of time on the ocean, sailing and sail boat racing. A graduate of Marblehead High School, she matriculated from Acadia University and completed a one year residency at the Newton-Wellesley Hospital to become a certified medical technologist. She later worked at the Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, MA. In 1964, she moved to Maine. Following her marriage, she took several education courses after serving as a teacher assistant and became certified. She subsequently worked in Hebron and Waterford as an elementary teaching principal and later only as a teacher. She married Alvin Barth in 1985 and is now retired. She has taught skiing at Sunday River and been involved in Maine Handicapped Skiing for three years. Her hobbies include golf, quilting, reading and gardening. Mother of two children by a previous marriage, she also has two grandchildren.

At the Society, she has been a very active volunteer as chair of the Garden and Grounds Committee and as head of the Middle Intervale Meeting House Committee, where she has played a leadership role in keeping that venerable Bethel landmark withstanding the challenges of time. Her keen interest in the appearance of the grounds surrounding the Society's historic buildings is evident in the plantings she and other members of the Committee have carefully placed and tended throughout the growing season for the past several years.

Chapman bid in the whole thing for \$900 and soon after sold the farm to George Chapman for a thousand dollars and reserved the mill. It was last used there in the spring of 1872 and in the autumn the machinery was taken out and moved elsewhere.

Today there is nothing left there except a few iron rods set in the ledges that once had posts on them to support the top timbers of the dam and a few cut stones that once supported some of the mill and I believe an old millstone that was discarded for a new one when the grist mill was still in operation.

(to be continued in the next issue)

Diary of William S. Hastings

(continued from the last issue)

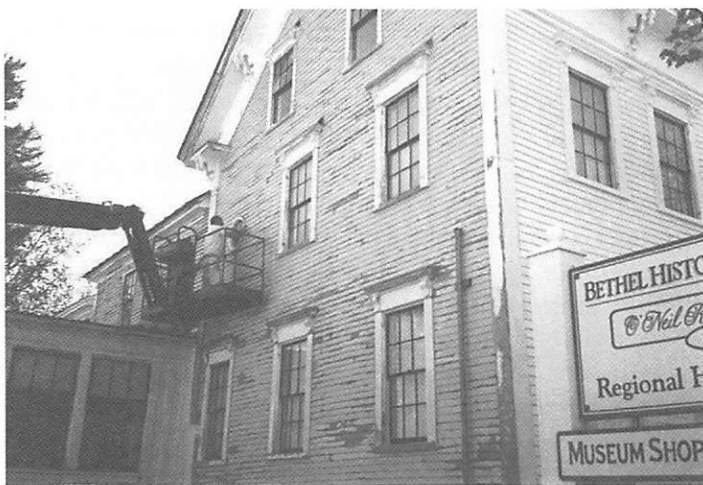


1938—December 24, Cloudy, snow 1 in. in Bethel. Paid Grange taxes. Lauri & Evelyn [Tamminen, Ruth's sister and brother-in-law] came up. December 25, Clear. Xmas Day. Usual tree, etc. Ruth's folks came up [from Greenwood]. December 26, Clear, warm. Weather Breeder I guess. I swamped road in Bean Swamp. Put up a stake at south end of Range 9 between Lots 9 & 10. December 27, Snow. 6 in. Rain. Put up load of spuds. 133 bu. & 150 bu. & 1 cwt. In all from Haakon's spuds. December 28, Cold, windy. Got sled out. I hauled limb wood from Coburn Place & L10 R7. December 29, Clear, cold. I cut cord wood on back lot. Practice meeting in eve. December 30, Cold, windy. Loaded Bob for Portland. Dad & I went to Fryeburg to see Edward [Hastings]. December 31, -14 [degrees]. Clear, cold. Fred Haines & I surveyed the lot line between lots 8 & 9 Range 7. Finished job O.K.

1939—January 1, Clear, cool. Home in a.m. Filled in lot lines on map, Mason & Gilead south of river. Greenwood in p.m. Snow at night 6 inches. January 2, Clearing, windy. Cut wood & birch. Leslie [Noyes] is working for us. Potatoes \$1.55 cwt. Grange installation in the eve. January 3, Clear, cold. Cut wood. Snow in p.m. January 4, Clearing. 3 inches snow. We laid a "yard" in 10 R 7. Hard wood. January 5, -15 [degrees] Clear, warm. Yarded hardwood logs. Wet day. Practice meeting. January 6, Rain. Put up spuds. Norway in p.m. January 7, Cloudy, warm. Bob took load of spuds to Hannafords. \$1.35 per cwt. I "chored" 1 ½ hrs. for [Fred] Haines. January 8, Cloudy. Surveyed church lot. Vernon [Smith] called in p.m. Grover & Alice [Brooks] called in eve. January 9, Clear, warm. Put up spuds. Bob hauled 'em to Portland in p.m. We cut wood. Whist Party in eve. January 10, Clear & warm. Snow is melting. Cut & yarded hardwood. January 11, Cooler. Cut & yarded. January 12, Cold. Windy. Sawed 4 cords of wood. 1 to Guy Bartlett, 3 to Grover [Brooks]. Put up spuds. Inspection in eve. January 13, Cold, windy. Cut white birch. January 14, Clear, cool. Cut & yarded white birch. January 15, Clear, cool. Went to camp & brot back the "wanigan." Got to tear the camp down. Hard wheeling on the ice but we made it. January 16, Clear & cool. Cut & yarded. Enlarged the dinner camp. About 5" or 6" snow which is fairly hard. Paid life insurance. January 17, 24 [degrees]. Cloudy. Put up spuds in a.m. Bob in Portland. We cut birch. January 18, Clear, cold. Cut & yarded. Nice cutting but rough country & slow job. January 19, Clear, cold. Cutting. Nearly finished the ravine. January 20, Clear, warm. Started cutting ice, 14" thick. Norway in p.m. Last trip for 1 month I hope! January 21, Clear, warm. Finished ice. I'm filing & repairing. January 22, Snow 3". Stayed home. Blew hard at night. January 23, Cold, windy. Put up spuds. Sent for a ½ H.P. motor, a bench saw and a planer. Also a blower for the forge. January 24, Snow in a.m. (light). Cut hardwood. January 25, Warm in a.m. Cold & windy at night. Ruth & I

went to Portland. Potatoes are \$1.40 cwt. January 26, -10 [degrees] Clear & cold! Put up spuds. Built table for power tools. Started a lathe. Back is broke. January 27, -25 [degrees] Clear & Cold! Round home in a.m. Norway & Bethel in p.m. January 28, Clear & warmer. I'm tinkering. Got the motor, saw & planer. January 29, Clouding. Greenwood. Took Ma Cole to Dr. Tibbetts. January 30, Clouding & snow. Cut timber & put up spuds. Old snow about 6" deep. Started snowing at noon. Nor'easter. January 31, Snow! Blizzard! About 14"-16" . I finished bench for power tools. Finished spuds in my back cellar. February 1, Clear & cold. Cut hardwood. Snow is knee deep. February 2, Snow. Bob & I broke road to peeled pulp in 10R9. Snow is deep. February 3, Clear & warm. Cut hardwood. Basketball game in eve. [at Gould Academy]. Saw Roland Wilkins. February 4, Clear & windy. Tinkered in a.m. Cut & hauled a big oak in 10R7 in p.m. February 5, Clear & cool. I turned a cantdog stock & ironed it. Lathe works good. February 6, Fair & warm. Bob in Portland. We yarded pine logs on Bean place. Sold 10M hardwood logs to Chadbourne. February 7, Snow. Nor'east. Back is bad. I'm home. Built mash hopper. Went to Bethel. Haircut. February 8, Cold. Set up coal brooder. Went to Norway & had back fixed. February 9, Cool & high wind. I'm home. Got 318 chicks (10 days old) from Mel Wilson. Mason meeting. February 10, Cloudy, snow. I'm tinkering. February 11, Clear, warm. Cutting birch. Snow is deep. Bob hauling pulp to river. February 12, Clear, cool. I set up my line shaft. Went to Greenwood. February 13, Cloudy. Cut birch. Whist Party at John's [Howe] in eve. February 14, Snow (light). Put up spuds. Finished spuds in shed cellar. Started on Coburn place. About 2400 bu. left. February 15, Rain, warm. Load of hay to Cary [Stevens]. Cleaned Coburn henhouse. Sent for car license. Colder at night. February 16, Colder & windy. Building mash hoppers & sunray screens. Moved power tools & workshop into shed cellar. February 17, Clouding. Cut birch in a.m. Norway for treatment in p.m. 4 cwt. spuds to Mike. Light snow. Car plates came, 23-628. February 18, Clear, cool. I've got a bad cold. Making maps. Crew is finishing hauling peeled pulp. February 19, Clouding & snow. Cold is bad. February 20, Cloudy. I'm laid up still. February 21, Cloudy. Bob in Portland. I gummed out a cross-cut saw & filed it. Cold is better. February 22, Snow, 4". Then wind! I mended harness. Started tractor set up in barn & ground oats. Car license came. February 23, Clear, cool. Cutting birch. February 24, Snow. Tinkered. Hauled birch for Kimball. Put up spuds for Urban [Bartlett]. 70 cents per bu. here. Northern Lights bright. February 25, Clear & warm. Nice day. I'm hauling limb-wood from Bean Swamp. Whist party. February 26, Cloudy. Snow-rain. Cleaned brooder cellar. Went to Greenwood. February 27, Clear, warm. Put up load spuds for Hannford. Brot 10 cwt. starter [chick feed] & 10 cwt. coal to my cellar. Snow is settling some. February 28, Cloudy, snow-rain. Leslie & I cut grey birch. Bob in Portland. Barbara, Virginia & Isabel went to So. Portland [school vacation visit with Mary Toft, East Bethel teacher].

(to be continued in the next issue)



Dennis Wheeler prepares the north side of the 1821 Robinson House for a fresh coat of paint. Mr. Wheeler consulted with members of the Building Committee to arrive at appropriate historical colors. These are "Carrington Beige" for the walls, "Sag Harbor Gray" on the trim, doors "Sag Harbor Gray (three shades darker)" with "Black Forest" shutters. Response to this selection has been very positive.



Members of the White Mountain History course pause in front of the historic Philbrook Farm Inn, where they enjoyed a tour and dinner as the final event of this always popular course. The Philbrook Farm Inn in Shelburne, New Hampshire has the distinction of being the oldest in the United States continuously owned by one family since its opening in 1861.

IN MEMORIAM

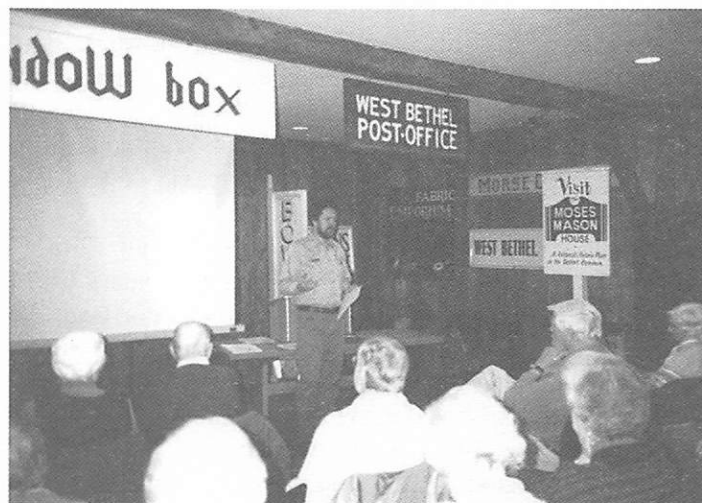
Died, 28 January 2002, Ralph Burris, Deland, FL, Life Member
 Died, 4 March 2002, Albert Cotton, Bethel, Senior Member
 Died, 19 March 2002, Fournin Powell, Rockland, Life Member
 Died, 11 April 2002, Lois Burgess, Bethel, Life Member
 Died, 14 April 2002, Beatrice Burris, West Paris, Life Member
 Died, April 2002, Harry E. Grover, Jr., Antioch, IL, Life Member
 Died, 6 June 2002, Marlene Marshall, Bethel, Life Member
 Died, 20 June 2002, William M. Throop, Jr., New York, NY, Life Member



During the first of the 2002 Lecture Series, Billie Gammon portrays Mercy Lovejoy, a 19th century Maine pauper to provide a "living history" view of poverty in rural Maine.



A tree-stump marble grave marker in Bethel's Woodland Cemetery for Mary J. Barker who died at the age of sixteen on 11 June 1861. These stones were sometimes selected for persons who died young or were "cut down" in the "high noon" of life.



Wayne Millen of the U.S. Forest Service based at the Androscoggin River Ranger Station of the White Mountain National Forest in Gorham, New Hampshire, made a presentation at the third class of the White Mountain history course held at the Society's Regional History Center.

Book Note

Covered Bridges in the Saco River Valley in Maine and New Hampshire. By Edwin and Doris Robertson. (Westbrook, Maine: Robertson Books, 2001. Pp. 88. Paper. \$9.95)

The nine remaining historic covered bridges in the Saco River Valley of Maine and New Hampshire are the subject of this well-illustrated guidebook. In their introduction, the authors write, "There are several reasons we chose the Saco River Valley for a covered bridge book. One reason is because all the remaining bridges on the Saco and its tributaries are in a relatively small geographic area. This makes it possible to visit all of them in one day without having to drive an unreasonable distance."

Though situated in close proximity to each other, these nine picturesque covered bridges display interesting differences, including variations in size, length, and structure; two of them have sidewalks. The individual histories are supplemented with handy location maps.

See order information on page 12.

Editor's Corner

Elsewhere in this issue, the passing of William "Pete" M. Throop, Jr., is noted. He was long the leader of the Bingham Betterment Fund and was very helpful to the Society in a number of its publication projects and in the first phase of the Capital Campaign. A Life Member of the Society, he always took great interest in Bethel. It was a pleasure to see him each time he visited for he was anxious to learn all the latest news. He never failed to impress me with his quiet dignity and unassuming manner. The Society has lost a good friend and I shall miss his visits.

SRH

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

The Bethel Historical Society is committed to building on its reputation as a premier regional history center that will continue to enrich the educational and cultural life of its community for generations to come. Members and friends have generously contributed to the operations of the Society and to the acquisition of the Robinson House. In order to ensure the long-term maintenance and further development of the Center's facilities, programs, and collections, the Society is seeking new forms of support. You, readers of *The Courier*, are asked to consider making a charitable gift to the Society through a bequest in your will, the establishment of a trust, or a number of other financial arrangements and options that are available. These charitable gifts can be structured to support the Society's mission while at the same time assuring the security of your family. For more information, please contact the Society by calling (207) 824-2908 or (800) 824-2910 or by writing to P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217 or by an e-mail: info@bethelhistorical.org

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Blake and Rachel MacKay, Bethel

Ray and Joan Cole, Bethel

Dr. Stephen V. Dock and Dr. Carolyn Wilson, Greenville, NC

Dr. Donald M. Christie, Jr., Gray

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Membership in the Society entitles you to:

- Free admission to the period house museum.
- A 10% discount on purchases of \$10 or more from the Society's Museum Shop
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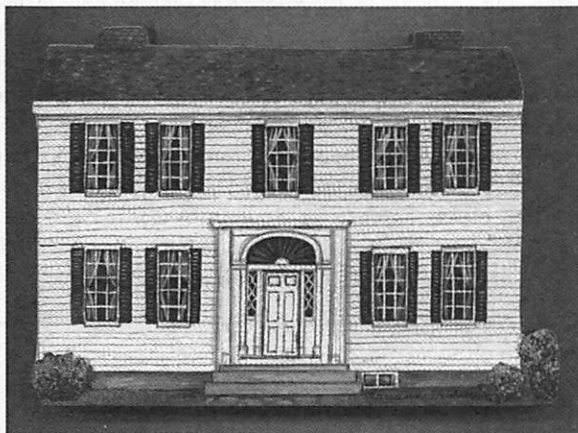
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